

Missoula County Media Release

Contact: Anne Hughes

Communications & Projects Director

ahughes@missoulacounty.us

(406) 258-3160

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Missoula County Commissioners Seek Input on Reducing Smoke and Wildfire Risks

Following the historic fire season of 2017, the Missoula County Commissioners are seeking to better understand ways to reduce the community's risk from wildfire while creating fire resistant landscapes. Mark Finney, Ph.D. Research Forester for the Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory, will be presenting to the commissioners at their public meeting on Feb. 8, 2018 at 2 p.m. in room 151 of the Courthouse Annex. Dr. Finney will brief the commissioners on the role of fire in our fire adapted forests and the need to proactively manage wildfire risks to address where, when and how we will be experiencing future fires and smoke in western Montana.

Dr. Finney's presentation will continue a public conversation with County leaders and staff about wildfire risk and impacts to the Missoula County community. The presentation is a precursor to a public meeting next month led by the County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) that will open a public comment period on updating the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). OEM is in the process of updating the CWPP that draws on some of the science and research from the Rocky Mountain Research Station. Public comment and involvement in the plan will further develop the plan's usefulness to the community.

"In order to live with fire, we must first understand the history and ecology of fire on the landscape of Missoula County," said Commissioner Strohmaier. "Dr. Finney's work is on the cutting edge of fire science and provides much needed context as we develop policies to enhance community resiliency."

Missoula County will announce the time and date for the public meeting next month in a subsequent media release.

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Missoula County is governed by a Board of County Commissioners, consisting of three elected members who serve six-year staggered terms. All legislative, executive and administrative powers and duties of the local government not specifically reserved by law or ordinance to other elected officials reside in the Commission (MCA-7-3-401). The current Board of County Commissioners includes Chair David Strohmaier, Jean Curtiss, and Nicole "Cola" Rowley.